

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

SUBJECT: UCD Career Fair

1. On 25 January 2001, I participated in an Engineering and Scientists Career Fair at UCD with Roger Henderson and Will Hall. Gary Britter of PAO provided key assistance in the booth display, setup and takedown. Nicole Gauthier prepared a recruiting brochure that was a feature of our discussions with students. Col. Walsh participated actively for over an hour of the four hour event. The booth was shared with HEC. Over 80 students stopped by the District portion of the booth, and resumes and contact information from over 50 students was collected. Students interested in summer jobs, co-op and permanent positions, had a variety of backgrounds, including environmental engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering, geotechnical engineering, chemistry, geology, computer science, and mechanical engineering. The student information list and resumes are being provided to District organizations. Information on the event and lessons learned follow. Copies of brochures used for discussion with students are attached.

2. Over 60 companies and agencies participated in the Career Fair, with over 50 percent involved in some aspect of the computer industry. A number of engineering companies and agencies were represented, including Caltrans, DWR, Ratheon, URS, CH2M-Hill, Black & Veatch, and Parsons-Brinkerhoff. Most booths consisted of professional displays, with a table of handouts, giveaways, and other display materials. Generally at least two people worked each booth.

3. If students slowed to glance at the Corps booth or showed other interest, we immediately asked if we could answer any questions they had about the Corps, and what type of job they were interested in. This generally was well received, effectively engaging the student for follow-on questions. We generally sought information on the student's major, year in school, graduation date, specific interests in their major, and whether they were interested in summer jobs, co-op positions or permanent positions. We asked interested students to provide a resume if they had one, asked them to provide contact information on a list, provided the attached handouts (including highlighting specific information on the recruiting brochure), and handed them our business cards to have a personal contact

4. We had previously solicited various District offices for potential types of jobs they might be offering. This information was useful when talking with students about potential opportunities. Giveaways at most Career Fair booths generally did not appear to attract significant interest from students. Candy, Corps pins and pens attracted little interest at the Corps booth. Students were extremely well focused on jobs and careers, and interested solely in job opportunities. Students that take the time and trouble to show up at Career Fairs can be assumed to be highly motivated. Students were

generally well prepared, including carrying copies of resumes to hand to potential employers at the Career Fair. A few students appeared to be familiar with the Corps of Engineers, but most were only somewhat aware of the Corps. We had to explain to many students that we were not recruiting for military service, but for civilian service to the Army and the Nation. Brocures were appreciated by students, but only the Recruiting Brochure was really useful. A few firms had video and laptop programs running at their booths, but students did not seem to be paying much attention to them. Company representatives that stood in front of the booth ready to talk, as we did, may receive more student participation. Two people manning a booth such as ours should be considered the minimum. One person cannot handle the normal traffic of visitors, and two allows for shifts during a lunch break. Having people from different parts of the organization is a benefit when talking to students, allowing the person with the closest connection to the students interests to explore their interests and capabilities. Explaining the Resumix system was always a challenge. Students are prepared to provide their resumes, but asking the students to reformat their resumes to get it into the Resumix system can be a turnoff for job seekers. Other firms accept the student resumes. We encouraged students to contact us if they had any questions about the Resumix system.

5. Potential ideas for future Career Fairs were discussed by the booth participants, including a larger booth dedicated to Corps District use, a continuous playing videotape, use of red balloons on the booth to encourage visual distinction from other booths, and providing plastic red bags with the castle logo for carrying brochures (students had little to carry all the material passed out at the Career Fair). Sign-up lists should include name, phone number, email address, type of job, major, year in school, and area of interest to facilitate matching students with jobs. In the future announcements posted at various departments could alert potential Career Fair attendees that the Corps will be at the event. The recruiting brochure is a key item for discussion with students. Knowledge of specific jobs that will be available is extremely important to this type of event.

John R. Hess, PE
Chief, Geotechnical Branch

incls.

cc:

DE
PPMD
ED
CO
PD
RE
IM
PAO

